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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

OFFICE OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

28 May 1951

MEMORANDUM OF INFORMATION NO. 75

TO : National Estimates Board

SUBJECT: Reactions of NATO governments to US proposals to include
Greece and Turkey in NATO

The US has commenced negotiations to secure the unanimous approval of the NAT nations for admission of Greece and Turkey into the NATO. The US has decided that inclusion of these countries in NATO would be more expedient and efficacious than a separate Mediterranean alliance and has set forth its position in a note to the British and French governments.

Some of the NAT countries have argued against inclusion of Greece and Turkey in NATO on grounds that such a move would represent a departure from the original concept of NATO as a defensive alliance of the North Atlantic community, including only democratic countries with a common cultural heritage. Some claim to be apprehensive over extending NAT commitments to a frontier area with no buffer between it and the Soviet sphere. The major problem, however, is securing agreement among the US, UK, and France on the Mediterranean command structure. If the Big Three can agree on the command structure, the other NAT countries will probably go along despite objections in principle and approve the admission of Greece and Turkey to NATO.

The following are the probable reactions of particular NAT countries to the US proposal:

1. The UK: The UK, whose lead the hesitant smaller countries, notably Norway and Denmark, will probably follow, has hitherto opposed inclusion of Greece and Turkey in NATO. The UK would probably prefer a Big Three agreement with Greece and Turkey outside the NATO. (The UK and France have a joint security treaty with Turkey signed in 1939 and terminating in 1954.) Iranian developments, however, combined with the UK's difficulty in achieving satisfactory security arrangements with Egypt, are threatening the UK's position in the Near East, a fact which makes firmer collective arrangements with Turkey more expedient and which may be decisive in leading to UK endorsement of the US proposals.

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DOCUMENT NO. 75NO CHANGE IN CLASS. ☐☐ DECLASSIFIED

CLASS. CHANGED TO: TS 3(C)

NEXT REVIEW DATE: 1990

AUTH: HM 70-2

DATE: 12 Feb 80 REVIEWER: ~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

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2. France: The French Government has indicated that it can take no position on the question until after its national elections in June. The French will, however, probably ultimately endorse the inclusion of Greece and Turkey in NATO, despite some fear of provocation to the USSR. Through membership on the top three-power Standing Committee of NATO, the French expect to be able to exercise greater influence over Mediterranean affairs; consequent to the inclusion of these two Mediterranean countries in NATO, and to prevent humiliating exclusion from top Mediterranean Councils such as occurred at the US-UK Malta meeting.

3. Italy: Italy has been in the forefront of those advocating the inclusion of Greece and Turkey in NATO, and the US decision has been enthusiastically received. Italy would gain greater security by the extension of the NATO defense line to the east and, through its participation in NATO councils, probably hopes to increase its influence in Mediterranean affairs.

4. Others: The Norwegian Foreign Office, which has hitherto been strongly opposed to this extension of NATO, has indicated that if the inclusion can be justified on strategic grounds, the Norwegian Government will support the move and attempt to overcome the political difficulties expected in gaining the approval of the Norwegian Storting (parliament). No expression on the question has yet been received from Canada, Denmark, Iceland, and the Benelux countries. These countries will probably go along with the decision of the larger countries, though with some reluctance to see this extension of commitments. Portugal will approve but will seek to make its approval conditional upon the concomitant inclusion of Spain in NATO.

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